

Army Headquarters Becomes Ordnance Ammunition Command

The Ordnance Ammunition Center in Joliet got a new name this week. It's now the Ordnance Ammunition Command.

The initials are still OAC. Brig. Gen. W. E. Laidlaw is still the commanding general. It's still located on the grounds of Joliet Arsenal. OAC's basic job is still the same — directing the Army's ammunition program.

The change was made because the new name is more descriptive of the varied nationwide activities carried on by OAC, and of the methods of operation that are followed. Last year, the national ammunition program administered by OAC amounted to more than \$2 billion.

THERE ALSO have been recent changes in the organization of the Ordnance Corps which made it desirable to change OAC's name. Maj. en. Emerson L. Cummings, Army Chief of Ordnance, last month established the new post of Deputy Chief of Ordnance, and appointed Brig. Gen. E. S. Gruver to that job. Gen. Laidlaw, as commander of OAC, now reports directly to Gen. Gruver and Gen. Cummings, rather than to the chief of the Ordnance Corps' industrial division.

The Ordnance Ammunition Command is actually a group of 950 persons, with Gen. Laidlaw in charge. About 50 of these 950 people are Army Ordnance Corps officers, and the rest are civil service employees. The entire 950 persons work in one large office building, which is located on the grounds of Joliet Arsenal,

ten miles south of Joliet and one mile west of U. S. Route 66A.

THIS GROUP directs the Army's nationwide program of ammunition production. The Chief of Ordnance in Washington tells Gen. Laidlaw how much ammunition he wants, the kinds he wants, and when he wants it. He also gives Gen. Laidlaw the money to pay for it. Then OAC takes over.

These 950 people at OAC purchase the parts for the ammunition from private firms all over the country. They direct the operation of about 30 government-owned ammunition plants and works located throughout the U. S. which produce the explosives and load and assemble the finished shells, bombs, rockets, etc.

One of these 30 installations is Joliet Arsenal, on whose grounds OAC happens to be located.

After the finished ammunition is made, it is tested by actual proof-firing at another OAC installation — Jefferson Proving Ground in Madison, Ind. If it is satisfactory, it is shipped to various storage depots.

IN ADDITION to all these functions, which have been carried on here since 1950, OAC within the past month has been assigned other tasks and responsibilities within the ammunition field.

In April it was announced that OAC would soon absorb the functions of the Small Arms Ammunition Center in St. Louis; that the supervision and control of all finished ammunition in storage would be transferred to OAC from Raritan Arsenal in N. J.; and that OAC would perform all the engineering work related to the ammunition items produced by OAC, and to the production methods and machinery used to manufacture them.

The transfer of these three functions was described by Gen. Laidlaw as significant progress

toward centralizing all the ammunition activities of the army at OAC, in line with the Ordnance Corps' "commodity concept."

IT WILL take probably a year to complete the transfer of these additional functions. When it is accomplished, it is expected that employment at the Ordnance Ammunition Command will be about 1,400.